A LETTER TO THE FARMERS AND TRADERS OF IRELAND.

Printed by S. Gosnell,
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A

LETTER

TO THE

FARMERS AND TRADERS

OF

IRELAND,

ON THE

SUBJECT OF UNION.

BY A FARMER AND TRADER.

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LETTER,

&c. &c.

Friends and Countrymen,

WELL aware of the difficulty of obtaining new matter on the ſubject of Union, and of the able manner in which that ſubject has already been diſcuſſed by men of much ability and information, yet I do not feel their arguments or reaſons come home to the ſituation of the middling ranks, or great body of the People; or a fair and plain ſtatement laid before them of what will be the ſituation of this Country, ſhould that great event take place,

whereby cool and rational men could be competent diſpaſſionately to judge for themſelves.

Men in power draw one way—men wanting power influence the People another—the weak, the uninformed, are forced by the current and the tide, in contrary directions, and know not where to fix.

The purport of the following addreſs is, in plain and ſimple language, to draw the attention of the middling ranks of men to matters of fact, and let them judge what may turn out beſt in the end, and to influence them to turn talents and induſtry in the uſeful channel that will bring preſent and future emolument to themſelves and to poſterity. I know Ireland well; few know it better. I knew the late unhappy commotions unfolded the various cauſes and progreſs of the ſtorm, and foretold the deſolating conſequences which followed.

The queſtion of Union ſhould come home to the unbiaſſed feelings of every man, abſtracted from party, from prejudice, from influence; in his cloſet, and *in his heart*, he ſhould

ſhould well weigh and conſider what will Ireland gain or loſe by an Union with Great Britain. To this point I ſhall confine myſelf as much as poſſible, and think it neceſſary to declare, I never was of conſequence enough to be of any party, and in all probability never ſhall; uninfluenced, unbought, and not worth a purchaſe.

I ſhall begin with the loſs of our Parliament. We ſhall ſurrender, what we are ſaid never to have had; a free and independent Parliament; that is, we loſe the name.

Some leading men tell you we are free and independent. They wiſh to be, and to continue leading men; and ſhould our Parliament be removed, they may ceaſe to be leading men, and we may ceaſe to be agitated.

In our Parliament there are not a few great and ſhining characters, who for worth, talents, diſintereſted patriotiſm and integrity, are not to be excelled in any country. I doubt not we ſhall have virtue enough to ſelect, and ſend them over as our repreſentatives,

ſhould that event take place, to where theſe virtues and theſe powers muſt have weight and effect. We ſhall loſe the name of independence, but we ſhall be gainers in the amount of near 200 needy men, holding penſions and almoſt uſeleſs employments, where one fourth the number would do the buſineſs, and do it better. In the language of poor Paddy (who blunders about a good thing, and ſtumbles over it in the end), our loſs will be our gain. We ſhall loſe all religious diſtinctions whatever, and we ſhall become one people; all contention for imaginary property will ceaſe, and laudable exertion for real property will commence, by honeſt induſtry, by a revival of arts and manufactures; every branch that is overſtocked with workmen in England, will come to a country ſo ſituated as this is—ſo near home—ſo healthful—ſo congenial and inviting in every poſſible reſpect. What may we not gain by capital, by induſtry, and by knowledge? We ſhall loſe *party* in Ireland; and what has not party done to injure and diſtreſs

treſs this country? What man is of conſequence here, that is not of ſome party, at the head of a party, or ſubordinate to ſome head, directed, and directing his inferior objects? Party, to which the real intereſts of Ireland have been ſacrificed from the earlieſt times; from 1165, the days of Dermod and Roderick o'Connor, till this preſent hour; then for territory, and fair tracts of land; and now for places and employments; talents and acquirements being almoſt ever out of the queſtion. Henry the Second for a time regulated one, and Union may for ever ſettle the other.

Which of our eſtabliſhments and boards are not over-burdened with unneceſſary officers? The collection of duties and taxes in Ireland is ſaddled with 10, 12, and in ſome inſtances 20 per cent. in collecting, while the Britiſh Miniſter has that buſineſs done at and under 5 per cent. !—What is all this but patronage, jobbing, and party, at the expenſe of the Country?

Every

Every merchant knows the Cuſtom-houſe of London: the legal quays are 1460 feet in length, and 40 feet in breadth; the ſearchers room is 20 by 24 feet, in which are 4 railed-in offices. Two ſearchers to each office, a long room, and a few ſmall apartments, do the buſineſs of the port of London, which is for one year from January 5th, 1798, to January 5th, 1799,

EXPORTS.

	£.	s.	d.
Home manufacture -	19,672,503	0	9
Foreign manufacture -	13,917,274	13	11
	33,589,777	14	8
Imports - - - - -	27,857,889	8	8
Official value - - -	61,447,666	3	4

But the *real value* is 94,963,286 0 0 and upwards. And this is but a part of that trade Ireland is invited to participate with Great Britain; when our balance of profits with all the world amounts to £.1,500,000, and after remittances of one million annually

to

to our abſentees, leaves us £. 500,000, about the amount ſome individual merchants have been known to clear in one year; and the intereſt of our debt at this time doubles that ſum. But to return. This buſineſs of the port of London is done in the ſituations I have deſcribed, a few additional licenſed quays excepted, and a little paltry office to each, by men who frequently attend from 6 in the morning till 7 in the afternoon (ſometimes later), that the merchant ſhould not be diſappointed in the goods which he may have engaged to his cuſtomers, or to the country, and on which he may have got money, or bills to turn into caſh on delivery, to anſwer exigencies, &c. and think themſelves very amply compenſated for their time and attendance at 3 or 400*l.* per annum.

How matters are managed here, it is not my preſent purpoſe to mention, nor is it my wiſh to give offence; but I truſt, if Union takes place, ſuch regulations will follow, as to have buſi-

neſs,

neſs done in proper time, and on ſuch terms, as the buſineſs itſelf ought and can afford to pay.

Our better-informed Roman Catholic brethren are lately viewing matters in a different light: the Pope is now reduced to the level of a Biſhop, whoſe authority is at home; the penal laws are aboliſhed; Roman Catholics are not now in ignorance and ſuperſtition, nor are they longer in the power of their clergy; as they have the power to acquire property, they advance in knowledge and ambition, and will puſh themſelves into conſequence; poverty and ſuperſtition vaniſh, impoſition is deſpiſed, in oppoſition to reaſon and common ſenſe.

As to the French, they owe us no friendſhip, *they mean us none;* they have been, and are, the ſubverters of all order and religion, the univerſal deſtroyers of mankind, to the amount of *two and an half* millions of ſouls, and *ſixteen hundred and ninety-one* millions of pounds ſterling! How they have plundered

unhappy countries, and deluged them with blood, is unneceſſary here to particularize.

They behold in this country the vulnerable part of Great Britain, and where to annoy them moſt—Ireland is the place: aſſiſted by the evil of Diſcontent, they keep up the alarm.

The ignorant, the poor, who are afraid or rather unwilling to return to induſtry, keep themſelves in bands, and live by robbing, with the vain expectation of what can never have effect, and want but public works and lenient meaſures brought home to their knowledge, their feelings, and their wants, to wean them totally from theſe falſe and deluſive expectations; the path opened and pointed out to acquire ſuſtenance for their ſtarving families.

In London, in March and November 1799, I pointed out the neceſſity for this; it was ſlightly attended to. I now hear a rumour of ſomething to be done; I hope jobbing will have no ſhare in it. I cannot ſee, as has been advanced, "how the ſpirit, or the hopes of our young "Nobility will be checked, or talents ſup-

" preſſed, by there being ſo few Iriſh Repreſent-
" atives in the Britiſh Parliament." Let us view the intended repreſentation of Ireland:

4 Spiritual Lords by rotation of Seſſion.
28 Temporal Peers for life.
100 Commoners to attend the United Parliament.

The queſtion ſeems to be, " What can this " number avail in the Britiſh Parliament?" This queſtion ſeems to take it for granted that the Parliament of England will be hoſtile to us. The contrary, I truſt, will be found the fact, or I am very much miſtaken: my real opinion is, they will not meet leſs, if they do not more ſupport than at home.

The freeholders of thirty-two counties have the undoubted right of ſending ſixty-four Members to repreſent them—hard is it indeed if they do not ſend two honeſt, upright, and independent men from each county: we are to have one Peer for each county alſo; two cities will, I truſt, ſend four members of like deſcription; our univerſity one: and if the thirty-one moſt conſiderable

derable cities and borough-towns do not return one virtuous man for each, they will well deſerve to be miſrepreſented. The liberality of a Britiſh Parliament will render further aſſiſtance unneceſſary: I am clear we ſhall fare better than at home, and that our fears are imaginary.

What may not one hundred good men do in the cauſe of their country? They would make their way through an hoſt of foes—but they will not meet an hoſt of foes: they will meet 558 independent Gentlemen, who will agree with them, and give them ſupport in every thing that is liberal and fair—I fear it not.

Our Commercial Propoſitions in 1785 had 110 ſupporters. Union in our Parliament had but 120 oppoſers. And ſhall the real intereſts of Ireland decline when Union becomes a law and ſolemn compact? England will not hurt us—it is not their inclination nor their intereſt to injure us: their uniform conduct has been to aſſiſt, to foſter, and protect us. Generoſity and hoſpitality ſcout the idea of injuſtice.

It is argued, that we ſhall loſe our independence—that Parliament that has done every thing for us ſince 1782. We ſhall loſe altercation; we ſhall loſe ferment; we ſhall loſe a blaze of oratory, that has ſoared on eagle's wings, above all heights, carrying the dazzled imagination through unknown regions, and from that giddy height has overlooked many ſolid advantages. Let us take good care not to loſe that friendſhip and ſupport, without which Ireland is nothing—without which Ireland can do nothing. Every man that knows this country, muſt know I mean the linen-trade, our ſtaple commodity. How ſhould we ſtand if England withdrew her bounty and protecting duties, which coſt her 20 per cent. and deal elſewhere on better terms, and meet gratitude and thanks? We ſhould loſe the only means of bringing money into Ireland, and exchange be for ever and oppreſſively againſt us.

Will England ſubmit to partial acts for ever? Be it recollected they underſtand trade to the full as well as we do; that they have capital

infinitely

infinitely beyond any thing we can poſſibly pretend to; that the Great Seal is there under her protection, and the power of refuſal alſo. Our whole amount of trade with Great Britain is £5,727,229 annually: let us not hazard any part of that, but improve by every poſſible exertion on what we have already obtained. England is advancing daily in her linen-trade, and may be brought to think it worth her while to carry it to extent. Scotland is treading faſt on our heels; far ſhort of Ireland in ſituation, in climate, or in ſoil—yet by induſtry and perſeverance, has advanced from 1 million to 23½ million yards annually in her linens. American proviſions are outſtripping us faſt. Laſt year's export, from *September* 30th, 1798, to *September* 30th, 1799, was 91,321 barrels of beef,

52,268 barrels of pork,

22,000 firkins of butter.

It may be ſaid, Iriſh proviſions will have the preference, as bearing the ſalt better—ſo they will for a time—that will be but for a time, American meadow and graſs lands are improv-

ing

ing every day, and will arrive at that firm and permanent quality, that the produce will bear the ſalt and carriage as well as the proviſions of any country whatever. The Weſt Indies is their preſent market: they will not only keep that, but will extend their connexions. Ireland, *beware*—the precipice is before you; turn from it in time; let no viſionary ſpeculations warp you from your certain and permanent intereſts. What cattle have we in Ireland at this preſent period? What time muſt it take to recover what has been wickedly and wantonly deſtroyed, and what are we to do in the interim, or what is by any earthly means in our power?—Pauſe, *reflect in time*, and ſee what Ireland can do without Britiſh protection and ſupport. Where are the means, the market, but in England—the capital, the ſhipping, the connexion, the friendſhip, and the ready money? Neceſſaries of life are riſing on us every day; all is againſt us, turn as we will: ſolid and permanent advantages to this country are only to be found in an Union.

If the real object be the welfare of our country, and not paltry pride, vain conſequence, and imaginary independence, we ſhall by Union arrive at what Ireland has ever wanted; a ſubſtantial yeomanry, not as ſoldiers, thank God! but as ſubſtantial and independent farmers: property will be ſecured, and riſe in value from 18 and 20 years purchaſe, the preſent rate of the beſt-circumſtanced eſtates in Ireland, to 25 and 30 years purchaſe. Wealthy men will lay out their money and live among us; we ſhall vie with, if not be ſuperior to any little iſland in the univerſe; our country will become the envy of nations, the granary and the garden of Europe.

Let us look at the abſtract of this queſtion. We loſe, that is, we tranſlate our Parliament to England, where I am firm in the belief we ſhall meet more real candour and diſintereſted friendſhip than at home. We ſhall loſe all party and jobbing in Ireland for ever; we ſhall reconcile and unite all claſſes and diſtinctions of men, *prevent ſeparation*, and join in the common

intereſt

intereſt of induſtry, manufactures, and the uſeful arts.

We ſhall ſecure protection and ſupport in our linen and proviſion trades: a field is opened in woollens alſo, and to an extent little thought of; we ſhall participate and extend with the firſt trading country in the world, our ſiſter country, and connect ourſelves to her in the ſtrongeſt ties for ever. We ſhall have our duties and our taxes collected on juſt and fair terms, and be eaſed of many grievous burdens in our eſtabliſhments. The well-informed on theſe ſubjects, whoſe writings and calculations it was unavoidable in ſome inſtances but to touch on, will conſider that this is calculated to reconcile the minds and inform the underſtanding of the middle orders of men, the bulk of the community; that the object is to convince them that Union is our intereſt, that it is on fair terms, and that we ſhall be gainers by it in the end; that we ſhould lay aſide all party prejudices and religious diſtinctions; agitate theſe queſtions no further, but lay ourſelves down to induſtry,

and in God's name follow the advice of St. Paul—" Study to be quiet, and mind your own " buſineſs."

I am your real and true friend,

A FARMER AND TRADER.

When the buſineſs of Union is finally ſettled you may have a farther addreſs on the ſubject of reformation among ourſelves, a general plan of induſtry, and the way to get rich and happy.

THE END.

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